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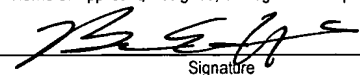
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No.: 09/803,560  
Applicant(s): Akira TSUBOUCHI, Kiyoshi OKUBO and Yasushi  
WATANABE  
For: METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING A HOLLOW  
RACK SHAFT  
Confirmation No.: 7306  
Customer No.: 24731  
Docket No.: 18733/00040  
Filed: March 9, 2001  
Group Art Unit: 3726  
Examiner: Marc Q. Jimenez (re-assigned from Percy W.  
Echols)

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Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on	
December 18, 2003	_____
Date of Deposit	
Brian E. Harris	_____
Name of Applicant, Assignee, or Registered Representative	
	_____
Signature	
December 18, 2003	_____
Date of Signature	

**AMENDMENT**

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated August 18, 2003, which provides for a response period ending November 18, 2003.

A Petition for Extension of Time, to extend the response period for the Office Action, dated August 18, 2003, for one additional month to December 18, 2003, is being filed concurrently.

Application No.: 09/803,560  
Amendment dated December 18, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of August 18, 2003

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 3 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 8 of this paper.

Please amend the above-identified application as follows: